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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000382

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SUBJECT: SUNNI LEADERS TELL DAS GODEC VIOLENCE MUST STOP

REF: BAGHDAD 195

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert Ford for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C) NEA DAS Robert Godec met on February 6 with key leaders from the Sunni Tawaffuq coalition at the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) headquarters. Dr. Adnan Dulaymi, Tarik al-Hashimi, Sheykh Khalaf Al-Ayan and Professor Hassan Bazzaz told DAS Godec that the security situation is their main concern. The leaders protested what they called U.S. inaction to curb alleged Ministry of Interior (MOI) raids, arrests and human rights abuses against the Sunni Arabs. DAS Godec pushed back saying that the USG opposes violence in Iraq by all parties - militias, terrorists, insurgents and people who masquerade as police. The Sunni leaders must do their part to stop the violence, he said. Al-Hashimi acknowledged this and recalled that the Tawafuq Front and the Iraqi Islamic Party had condemned terrorism, including attacks against Shia. Bazzaz commented that it is unfair to compare violence by the government to violence by insurgents. Hashimi added that Tawafuq's constituency wants proof that participation in the political process was worth it. He asked what Sunni Arabs have to show so far for their participation.

12. (C) Dr. Adnan Dulaymi asked why action has not been taken to raid secret prisons that were previously identified. PolCouns responded that most Sunni Arab reports and complaints lack the necessary information that would allow for a proper investigation. We need better information. To address that problem the Embassy has established a group to track these complaints and military investigators will be provided to interview witnesses. But it is not enough to charge wrongdoing, said PolCouns, the Sunnis must provide some evidence. The complaints would have greater credibility both among the Shia and the international community if neutral sources, like human rights NGO's, were also raising these cases instead of just political parties, added DAS Godec. The Shia think that Sunni reports of human rights violations are just political propaganda to gain advantage in the government formation talks, said PolCouns. He urged them to find ways to build greater interest and concern in these reports.

13. (C) The Sunni leaders alleged such violence was meant to drive Sunnis out of Baghdad and out of Iraq; entire areas of the country are now ruled by Iran or its intelligence agents. Hashimi claimed to have a "secret" Da'wa party letter proving that Iran is financing Zarqawi terror. DAS Godec noted that there is a lot of Sunni money financing terror also, which

the leaders did not deny. Godec also asked that they provide any direct evidence of Iranian financing of terror in Iraq. (Comment: There was a great deal of spluttering and hyperbole here. They were unable to provide the letter or any other documentation supporting their charges or Iranian influence. The exaggeration notwithstanding, there are real human rights issues and these issues are driving Sunni Arab politics now. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) Commenting on the government formation talks, Hashimi said that the Sunnis must play a part in the decision making and implementation process in government. The Prime Minister cannot have sole authority over the government. The platform signed by Ayad Allawi and Kurd leader Barzani (reftel), with its National Security Council with all political leaders, provides just such a framework. Red-lines for the Sunnis include ensuring that the Interior, Defense and Intelligence agencies are not run by ministers with ties to militias or political parties. Ministries that have undergone major purges of Sunnis, like Health and Education, will need to be restructured. The Sunnis have traditionally formed the governing, educated, technocratic class said Hashimi.

¶5. (C) Comment. The Tawafuq leaders clearly appreciated the chance to host an official from Washington at their headquarters in the Red Zone (this was the first such visit to their headquarters by a Washington-based official that we can remember). Their blustering and hyperbole aside, they also clearly want American help to balance what they perceive to be inordinate Shia influence in the

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emerging new government. End comment.

¶6. (U) DAS Godec cleared this cable.
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